

VZCZCXRO3778
OO RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDBU RUEHLH RUEHPW
DE RUEHNE #5549/01 2201130
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 081130Z AUG 06
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7493
INFO RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ALMATY 0577
RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT 0384
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3390
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK 0387
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 6733
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 6748
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 0177
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 9786
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 3215
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 7433
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 9637
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT 0566
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3685
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 5825
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 5854
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 5160
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE 2939
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 5062
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 3580
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2019
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 4318
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHMFISS/HQ USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NEW DELHI 005549

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/07/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ENRG](#) [EPET](#) [PBTS](#) [TRGY](#) [OVIP](#) [IN](#) [KZ](#) [KG](#)

PK, TX, TI, IR, NP, CH, BG

SUBJECT: SCA A/S BOUCHER MEETS WITH GOI CENTRAL ASIA CHIEF

Classified By: Charge Geoff Pyatt for reasons 1.4 (B,D)

11. SUMMARY: Assistant Secretary Richard Boucher used an August 7 meeting with Minister of External Affairs Joint Secretary (Eurasia) Jaimini Bhagwati to brief on current U.S.

SIPDIS

relations with Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan and to probe India's relationships with Central Asia. Boucher specifically urged the Government of India to help strengthen the Kyrgyz parliament. Boucher and Bhagwati discussed various plans now on the table to transfer energy between Central Asia, India, and Pakistan. Boucher also gleaned information from Bhagwati on India's educational outreach programs to its Central Asian neighbors, and he shared U.S. ideas to get more involved. END SUMMARY.

India Thinks Uzbekistan Not Quite Ready for Prime-Time

12. (C) Bhagwati said Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited Uzbekistan in April 2006 because it is "a part of our neighborhood," is strategically located, has a huge urban population, and a senior Indian had not visited in some time. He added that "our relationship is on an even keel" and mentioned that Uzbekistan has sought closer economic relations with India, especially in the area of oil and gas sales. Bhagwati admitted this closer relationship would be

difficult to fulfill, due to the fact that the Uzbek oil companies were state-owned and notoriously unforthcoming about their resource holdings and their business details. This lack of transparency, said Bhagwati, made it almost impossible for Indian petroleum companies to trust them enough to contemplate a deal seriously. Bhagwati added that India and Uzbekistan had signed a Memorandum of Understanding on energy-trade, which he described as non-committal and perfunctory. Boucher expressed surprise to hear that Uzbekistan had approached India with potential gas business, noting that all of their oil and gas deals seem to be dictated directly by Gazprom and Russia.

Kyrgyzstan is Problematic

¶3. (C) Boucher described the currently strained relations between the U.S. and Kyrgyzstan, mentioning the tit-for-tat ejection of diplomats on both sides in the past few months. He stated that this was due to spurious allegations of wrongdoings by US diplomats. Boucher added that the Kyrgyz "seem more interested in money than anything else," noting that they had agreed to accept USD 17 million to renew the lease of the U.S. military base on their territory. Boucher urged Bhagwati to consider GOI support for democracy programs to try to empower the now-weak Kyrgyz parliament to better counterbalance the President. Bhagwati replied that India has parliamentary exchanges with Tajikistan, and could send some Indian Members of Parliament to Kyrgyzstan, too. Bhagwati concurred that India was also concerned about drugs, killings and border issues in Kyrgyzstan.

India Cautious on Power Deals

NEW DELHI 00005549 002 OF 003

¶4. (C) Bhagwati mentioned that Tajik President Rahmonov would meet with the Prime Minister, President, National Security Advisor, Minister of Defense, and the Minister of Mines during his current visit. Bhagwati specifically mentioned one "small" Tajik/Indian hydroelectric aid project, "Varzov 1," in which the Government of India is assisting the Tajiks in rehabilitating their outdated machinery.

¶5. (C) Boucher noted that the U.S. is working with Tajikistan on financing power-distribution projects, adding "we'll need as much power as we can get in Afghanistan." Boucher noted that the U.S. hopes to get both India and Pakistan to cooperate with this plan.

¶6. (C) Bhagwati replied cautiously that India is very eager to get more power from any source possible, but that it will remain skeptical until it sees some concrete, feasible plans. "How will it reach us?" he queried, noting that there are border disputes with the both Pakistan and China, the two likeliest locations for cross-border energy transmission. Boucher suggested high-voltage lines through a more stable crossing, like Lahore, Pakistan as a workable solution. Bhagwati noted that India participated in June in the electricity conference in Istanbul, and would also attend the next one in Dushanbe in October.

India puts all its faith in educational exchanges, for now

¶7. (C) Bhagwati lauded "Human Resource Development" as India's best and least expensive method to provide aid and generate goodwill with its Central Asian neighbors. He spoke enthusiastically about the educational scholarships that India provides to roughly 50 - 100 students per Central Asian neighbor annually, who come to study English and technology programs. Bhagwati also mentioned that the Indian Foreign Service Institute offers training to young Central Asian diplomats, as well as sending Indian diplomatic teachers

directly to neighboring countries to instruct them there at home. Bhagwati mentioned that India has set up information technology study-centers, modest ventures of a few rooms and computers, in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, but not yet in Turkmenistan, he admitted, adding, "it is a difficult country."

¶18. (C) Boucher lamented that the U.S. did not have the means to offer higher education study to anywhere near as many students as does India, due to the high cost of education in the U.S. He then floated an informal proposal to Bhagwati, whereby the U.S. might pay for some Central Asian students to come to India to study on U.S. funded scholarships. Bhagwati seemed agreeable to the proposal.

Communication/Transport - the Achilles heel?

¶19. (C) Boucher expressed frustration at the difficulty of getting the Central Asian nations to communicate and cooperate effectively with each other. Bhagwati

NEW DELHI 00005549 003 OF 003

commiserated, noting, "In the past they never communicated directly with each other - all communication went through Moscow - now they are only learning how to talk to each other."

¶10. (C) Bhagwati noted that ground transportation was virtually impossible in that part of the world. He stated that air travel, both passenger and freight, was a possible solution, but was still underdeveloped. Bhagwati noted that there is no direct air connection from New Delhi to Tajikistan, only via Moscow or Almaty. He avowed that there is plenty of demand for more air connections on the profit-focus of Indian carriers, and asked for U.S. ideas to create more air links.

¶11. (C) COMMENT: While discussion did not yield any large breakthroughs, it is clear that India and the U.S. largely see eye-to-eye in Central Asia, and there is room for us to work well with India in this region. END COMMENT

¶12. (U) A/S Boucher cleared this message.

¶13. (U) Dushanbe Minimize Considered
PYATT